DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 204 EA 027 469

AUTHOR Brinson, Kenneth H., Jr.; Miller, Jeanie
TITLE Invitational Theory and Total Quality Management: Implications for Professional Practice and Educational Reform.
PUB DATE Oct 95
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Educational Research Association (Ellenville, NY, October 25, 1995).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Environment; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Theories; Elementary Secondary Education; *Humanistic Education; Organizational Climate; Organizational Development; School Restructuring; Self Concept; Systems Approach; *Total Quality Management

ABSTRACT

Education reform solutions often ignore the people involved and concentrate solely on the systems in which they work. This paper presents an overview of invitational education theory and Total Quality Management (TQM) theory and describes their uses for improving education. Both theories are holistic approaches; stress the cooperative nature of the education process; emphasize a teaching and learning process in which students continually use their initiative; and stress the inclusiveness of the education process (Paxton 1993). Invitational education reminds educators that a commitment to the role of working with students comes first and is derived from two theoretical perspectives--the perceptual tradition and self-concept theory. TQM is based on W. Edwards Deming's Fourteen Points of organizational development; TQM's systems approach is linked to William Glasser's control theory. Invitational education, TQM, and control theory reinforce each other as an appropriate restructuring approach. Humanistic leadership realizes peoples' potential, invites development, empowers players, and enhances quality. (Contains 40 references.) (LMI)

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ED 393 204

Invitational Theory and Total Quality Management:

Implications for Professional Practice and Educational Reform

Kenneth H. Brinson, Jnr. and Jeanie Miller

The Pennsylvania State University

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Northeastern Educational Research Association
Ellenville, New York

October, 1995

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Invitational Theory and Total Quality Management:

Implications for Professional Practice and Educational Reform

A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) ushered the educational community into years of educational reform that still continue. Although there are many reports calling for reform, there are few that explain how to get from where we are to where everyone seemingly wants us to be (Nehring, 1992). There is a pervasive feeling that whatever is being attempted in education is not working and therefore needs to be changed or restructured in dramatic fashion. Educational reform has become "faddish" and the reports are often conflicting in their explanations of what is needed. Large numbers of reform "solutions," when instituted, tend to worsen the problems that they were created to irradicate. Unfortunately, many reforms ignore the people involved and concentrate solely on the systems in which they work. Often, little attention is paid to what is readily available, easily attainable, and logical to use.

Toch (1991) suggests that after years of educational reform, the greatest obstacle to academic excellence is apathy and alienation between teachers and students and how the schools contribute to that problem. He elaborates further by insisting "there is a tremendously important human element of the crisis in education that the reformers have largely neglected" (p. 4). Anderson and Steigelbauer (1994) propose that restructuring implies changes in school governance, organization, context, and processes. Murphy (1991) views educational transformation as involving all key players working on all components of the system. "For the first time in our history, the business of schooling is

being redefined in relation to the customer" (p. 17). Current "focus on the human element" directs restructuring towards the development of improved learning climates and organizational adaptivity, transforming schools from controlled to empowered (p. 18).

Whitaker and Moses (1994) state "restructuring is not adding more of the same, tinkering around the edges, or even making significant improvements to the current structure . . . it is a total reconceptualization" (p. 2). What is first needed is the creation of a compelling vision of what the future of a school might be. Real improvement in education will only occur when all stakeholders coalesce to construct positive change for student growth and achievement through shared vision, quality improvement, and collaboration.

As transformation becomes the responsibility of all stakeholders, the lessons learned from Invitational Theory and total quality management in schools can necessarily and sufficiently serve the restructuring needs of education. Invitational Theory "provides both a theoretical framework and practical strategies for what educators can do to create schools where people want to be and want to learn" (Purkey & Novak, 1988, p. 11). Total quality management offers a comprehensive philosophy, inclusive of implementation tools, to restructure education through processes that empowers "leadership and people" (Covey, 1991, p. 262). It is a democratic approach to managing schools, depictive of Miron's (1991) poststructuralism.

Why would an understanding of these ideas be helpful to educators? Because anyone wishing to reform the field of education should realize "the role of school leaders is not to know what's best and to impose it on others, but to lead groups of people through

inquiry and a synthesis of research to a common understanding about what is most worth doing in school and how to go about achieving this" (Short, E., 1994, p. 504). These models share a great deal with the notion of "school culture" in that they can also be construed as "pattern[s] of beliefs and expectations of the members of the community that guide their predominate attitudes and behaviors" (Lomotey & Swanson, 1990, p. 68).

Patsy Paxton (1993), of the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University in South Africa, compared Invitational Theory to total quality management as they apply to education. In her research she listed four main similarities:

1. Both are holistic approaches that deal not only with classroom practices, but with the broader issue of school management, each also values the essential roles of all who are involved in the education process.
2. Both theories reject school practices based on coercion, threats, competition, and ranking, instead they stress the cooperative nature of the education process, from student group projects to team-teaching.
3. Both approaches emphasize a teaching and learning process in which students are continually called upon to use their initiative.
4. Both approaches stress the inclusiveness of the education process from the very gifted student to the educationally disabled student, essentially meaning a rejection of exclusivity, tracking, and pull-out programs that label students. (p. 33)

She concludes her article by stating that these approaches constitute viable alternatives to the current educational practices that she dismisses as "outdated" (Paxton, 1993, p. 34).

Invitational Education

"Dissatisfaction with conceptualizations of school practices that negated the heart of the educative process, led to the development of an alternative framework that was more sensitive to the perceptual realities and ethical responsibilities of participants in the educative process" (Novak, 1992, p. 77). That framework has become the field of Invitational Education. Texts have been written, hundreds of meetings and conferences have been held, and an International Alliance for Invitational Education has been established. Invitational Education stands poised to become one of the more logical, ethical, democratic, and caring philosophies to enter the arena of educational reform. Lewis (1989) reminds educators that a commitment to the role of student, or to the role of a professional working with students, is the only thing "sacred" in the current scene of restructuring. Invitational Education places people first and endeavors to assist students and professionals in their quest to fulfill their individual potentials.

"Invitational Education is a metaphor for an emerging model of the educative process consisting of four value-based assumptions about the nature of people and their potential" (Purkey & Novak, 1988, p. 11). "We believe it offers a defensible approach to the educative process and a practical way to make school 'the most inviting place in town'" (Purkey & Novak, 1984, p. 2). The four value-based assumptions provide a framework for Invitational Education, and what education can be.

First, "people are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly" (Purkey & Novak, 1988, p. 12). If educators do not believe this to be true in regard to students, then the students will live up to, or down to, the educators expectations. If, however, educators accept this assumption, success will be the reward as educators will discover methods ensuring each individual will achieve this outcome. Mortimer Adler (1982) reminds educators that children are indeed unequal in their capacity to learn, but if treated individually are always capable of improving their situation (cited in Noll, 1991). Verbal and non-verbal invitations help students understand that they are responsible and capable (Wilson, 1986).

Secondly, education should be viewed as a "collaborative, cooperative activity" (Purkey & Novak, 1988, p. 12). All individuals in the educative process should be invited to have a say in the planning of their own destiny. Carl Rogers (1983) writes that an individual must be allowed freedom to choose alternatives, stating that even if the choices are few, that their freedom exists (cited in Noll, 1991, p. 94). Dictated standards of behavior demanding conformation do not enjoy the high rates of success attained by collaborative ventures.

Thirdly, "people possess untapped potential in all areas of human endeavor" (Purkey & Novak, 1988, p. 13). A great deal of what educators do is based on the perceived potential of the stakeholders in the educational process. The curriculum, physical environment, programs offered, rules and regulations reflect assumptions. If those assumptions are raised, then a more inviting atmosphere is created which will ensure a more successful educational process for all involved. It is of paramount importance that

educators never anticipate a limit to the potential of any individual, whether a student or colleague.

Fourth, "human potential can best be realized by places, policies, and processes that are specifically designed to invite development, and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally" (Purkey & Novak, 1988, p. 14). This assumption points to the main emphasis of Invitational Education: human relationships and achieving individual potential. "An invitation convinces children that their uniqueness has a special integrity of unquestioned value . . . the message helps youngsters view their qualities, characteristics, and descriptions of self in the most positive fashion imaginable" (Wilson, 1986, p. 11).

The Perceptual Tradition and Self-Concept Theory

The theoretical foundations of Invitational Education emanate from two perspectives: the perceptual tradition and self-concept theory. A Freudian would conclude that people do what they do as manipulated by internal dynamics of the unconscious. A behaviorist would proffer that environmental stimuli influence behavior, "that behavior is caused by stimulus, response, reinforcement and reward" (Arceneaux, 1992, p. 88). Fink cites Fullan when he writes "since change in organizations is about change in people, attention to their perceptions of reality and particularly their sense of self are fundamental to successful 'change agentry'" (Fink, in press). The perceptual tradition maintains that people act according to their perception of the world at the point of action stretching "far beyond sensory experience to include such perceptions as beliefs, values, feelings, hopes,

desires, and the personal ways in which persons regard themselves and other people" (Combs, Avila, & Purkey, 1978, pp. 15-16). It stresses ultimate responsibility for one's actions. This theory suggests "that each person is a conscious agent who considers, constructs, interprets, and then acts" (Purkey & Novak, 1988, p. 17).

Self-concept theory is a unique system of self and one's personal world. "It is the organization of perceptions about self that seems to the individual to be who he or she is; it is composed of thousands of perceptions varying in clarity, precision, and importance in the person's peculiar economy" (Combs, Avila, & Purkey, 1978, p. 17). How people view themselves determines how they view all that is around them and how they relate to, and interpret, what is observed. "A basic assumption of the theory of self-concept is that we behave according to our beliefs . . . if this assumption is true, then it follows that the teacher's beliefs about himself and his students are crucial factors in determining his effectiveness in the classroom" (Purkey, 1970). According to Purkey and Novak (1988), there are six characteristics of the self-concept theory, an individual:

1. Strives for stability by seeking orderliness and harmony;
2. Functions to maintain, protect, and enhance itself.
3. Seeks consistency by assimilating or rejecting perceptions that do or do not fit preconceptions.
4. Allows change when desire is high and risk is low.
5. Learns and develops as a result of inviting or disinviting experiences.
6. Constructs and reconstructs experience throughout life.

layer by layer, experience by experience. (p. 18)

Dean Fink, writing in an as yet unpublished book, addresses the question of motivation as it relates to free will. Daresh and Playko (1995) agree with Fink in their interpretation of motivation by stating "no one ever truly motivates another person . . . ultimately, whether or not a person works harder rests in that person's own choice" (p. 155). Fink writes:

> Between stimulus and response, individuals have a conscious choice to behave based on their knowledge and perceptions. To say therefore, that one person can motivate another is to deny free will. A leader can create a context in which a person is motivated to act in preferred ways, but from the perceptual point of view cannot motivate someone, anymore than one can oblige love or any other human emotion. (in press)

When moving from theory into practice, emphasis should be placed on places, people, policies, and programs. The long-range plan for implementation is known as the "Four Corner Press." The elements of this plan focus on the behavior of the educator and include: (a) being personally inviting with one's self, (b) being personally inviting with others, (c) being professionally inviting with one's self, and (d) being professionally inviting with others. "While these corners are simple to describe, they are not easy to implement . . . the goal is to balance the demands of the four corners and to orchestrate ways to blend them together" (Purkey & Novak, 1988, p. 26).

Total Quality Management

Total quality management originated from managerial beliefs developed by W. Edwards Deming. An American management theorist and statistician, Deming's work in the 1930's with Walter Shewhart focused on how data could be used to improve work processes. Deming developed management theories that complemented Shewhart's work, who developed methods for waste reduction and achievement promotion in industrial and manufacturing processes. Deming's work led to the management philosophy that enabled the Japanese to financially recover from the devastation of World War II (Schmoker & Wilson, 1993). Total quality management in schools is, with the incorporation of William Glasser's Control Theory, Deming's management philosophies applied to education.

Well known throughout the total quality management literature are Deming's fourteen points recommended for management. In brief, they are:

1. Create constancy of purpose for improvement of product or service.
2. Adopt the new philosophy and take on leadership for change.
3. Cease dependence on mass inspection to achieve quality.
4. End the practice of awarding business on the basis of price tag alone, a long-term relationship based on trust is preferred.
5. Improve constantly and forever every process for planning and production.
6. Institute on-the-job training.
7. Adopt and institute leadership aimed at helping people, machines, and gadgets do a better job.
8. Drive out fear so everyone can work effectively.

9. Break down barriers between departments.
10. Eliminate slogans and work targets asking for zero defects and new levels of productivity.
11. Eliminate quotas and management by objectives; substitute leadership.
12. Remove barriers that diminish pride in workmanship.
13. Institute program of education and self-improvement.
14. Put everybody to work to accomplish the transformation; the transformation is everybody's job. (Byrnes, Cornesky, & Byrnes, 1992)

The utilization of total quality management change practices directly presents itself to Smith and O'Day's (1990) goal for school reform to improve student outcomes:

> We believe that to accomplish this goal we must change what happens in the school itself, one obvious place to begin a discussion of strategy is with a picture of the kind of schools we would like to see in the future . . . the most effective schools maintain a schoolwide vision, mission, and common instructional goals which tie the content, structure, and resources of the school together into an effective, unified whole . . . the particulars of the vision will differ from school to school . . . the common vision and positive climate can best be promoted by system decision-making and shared responsibility. (pp. 235-236)

In schools, increased responsibility to teachers and principals, via decentralized control and school based management, leads to the "overall professionalization" of the work force (Carlson, 1989, cited in Murphy, 1991, p. 3). The major rationale for school based management is supported by the belief that the closer a decision is made to the student, the better the decision is likely to serve the student (Clune and White, 1988, cited in Murphy, 1991).

Total quality management proffers methods for decisions to be made close to students at the school site, often by students themselves. It employs systems process thinking and scientific data gathering tools via a plan, do, study, act (PDSA) cycle for decision making (Scholtes, 1992). Established goals and objectives, developed from a customer needs satisfaction doctrine, come about through participative team decisions made by those most closely involved with, and affected by, the decisions.

The desire is to advance collaborative, humane, continuously changing and improving organizational cultures. Emphasized is the absolute need for meaningful, visually graphic data, the identification of root causes to problems, and the systematic, logical application and continual advancement of solutions (Scholtes, 1992).

People are encouraged to view the school district's "fit" into the larger community system. System aims are:

> To create lifetime learners.
>
> To develop students who enjoy learning.
>
> To graduate productive members of society.
>
> To produce employable people.
>
> To foster people committed to cooperation.
>
> To develop continually improving learners.
>
> To provide ever-increasing benefits for everyone in the community.
>
> (American Association of School Administrators, AASA, 1992, p. 9)

The AASA (1992) believes that total quality management can work for schools as it has in business and industry. Of primary importance are the long-term commitment and

attitude towards continuous improvement. "Quality is definitely not a quick fix" (AASA, 1992, p. 2). With regard to educational restructuring, two additional elements of total quality should be noted:

1. "Quality is not about putting out fires, but about redesigning the system and the way it is managed so that there are fewer fires to put out" (AASA, 1992, p. 17).
2. "The continuous improvement process does not cost anything, it is basically a change of attitude" (Larrae Rocheleau of Sitka, Alaska; cited in AASA, 1992, p. 17).

Though systems thinking may resemble a mechanistic metaphor, the soul of its movement is the human element. Its value is added to by invitation, but its heart is found in the tenets of non-coercive management and positive school climate proposed by Glasser's Control Theory.

Glasser's Control Theory

William Glasser is best known in the field of counseling psychology for the development of reality therapy. In the 1960's, working as a consultant to public education, Glasser realized the usefulness of his ideas when applied to systems management (Corey, 1991). Reality therapy came to the arena of educational reform as control theory for quality schools. It may be viewed as a psychodynamic underpinning of Deming's doctrine for total quality management.

Control theory espouses that behavior is not only intrinsically motivated, but purposeful and chosen, driven by powerful forces desirous of meeting personal needs for survival, love and belonging, recognition, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 1994). Chosen behavior is an individual's best attempt to achieve perceived wants (Corey, 1991). The role of the leader is to facilitate the enhancement of good feelings found in work tasks as work becomes inherently fulfilling to individual quality worlds.

Key dimensions representing Glasser's conditions for quality, which encompass control theory and Deming's fourteen points, include: (a) the work environment must be warm, supportive, and trusting -- free of criticism and coercion; (b) workers should only be asked to do useful work and encouraged to contribute to the usefulness of tasks; (c) workers are asked to do the best they can, quality is assumed as the best effort of both workers and managers; (d) quality work is the product of continual self-evaluation and improvement; and (e) quality work always feels good, therefore it is a powerful incentive for further motivation and continued quality.

Regarding control theory as applied to total quality management in schools, similar to the premises of Invitational Education, Kaplan and Geoffrey (1990) write:

> William Glasser advised that students must achieve a sense of belonging and control within their classrooms. He proposed that students work in teams in which they identify their own personal needs and establish the skills to make and carry out choices in a supportive school climate. (p. 8)

Kaplan (1995) later wrote:

> School climate is an affective dimension that describes how people in a given environment feel about being there. Teachers and students, like all people, function best in an

> atmosphere of personal safety, trust, mutual respect, perceived value to others, self-esteem, meaningful purpose, and satisfaction (p. 265).

Overall, the lessons of control theory and total quality management, as the two relate to schools, give life to the power found in:

- The human spirit when encouraged by trust, fun, and freedom.
- The synergy of collaborative efforts.
- The intrinsic desire for quality and continuous improvement.
- The voice of the customer.
- The whole as being the sum of the parts.

Implications for Practice and Reform

Whenever a model is held up to educators as the "answer" to the problems faced by the educational community, the educators should be wary. There are countless models claiming to rid the profession of its evils, and all should be greeted with hesitancy and a critical eye. Perhaps the answer lies not in encompassing any one school of thought, but in being able to glean bits and pieces from several. Perhaps educators can apply a little of what they understand about Invitational Education and total quality management to make a positive difference in their own lives and in those with whom they work.

By fostering perceived positive environments for schooling, through the incorporation of Invitational Education and elements of total quality, the furtherance of the intrinsic natures of people motivated towards improvement can be the only result. Unquestionably, Invitational Education, total quality management, and control theory

complement and reinforce each other as dogma for restructuring. Synergistically, the three act as catalytic additives to initiate leadership and implement practice to redefine school organizations.

Any student of counseling psychology can recite the importance of Carl Rogers' humanistic beliefs that people need and warrant the unconditional positive regard found in respect, genuineness, and empathy. This paper offers strategies to incorporate these beliefs into school reform. The history of educational reform labels models as "trendy," "faddish," "wavelike," and "pendulum swings" among others. However, substantive educational reform can only occur when all stakeholders coalesce to construct positive change for student growth and achievement.

These are not radical new concepts. In many ways they are the acknowledgment of what has always been there, even though often overlooked. Humanistic leadership realizes potential, invites development, empowers players, and enhances quality. If enough educators and other stakeholders wish to improve their lot through the lessons of these methodologies, then there will be reform and schools everywhere can become "the most inviting places in town".

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K. Brinson is a Ph.D. candidate and graduate assistant to the University Council of Educational Administrators, UCEA, The Pennsylvania State University.

J. Miller is a Ph.D. candidate and graduate assistant to the Center for Total Quality Schools, CTQS, The Pennsylvania State University.